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Death List and Denunciations Are All in a Day's Work

In Central America these days, when the CIA tells you to leave a country and a ranking official of the government there denounces you in a nationwide broadcast, the express route to the border is the only way to travel.

University anthropologist Robert M. Carmack is an authority on the culture of Guatemala's Quiche Maya, not a spy or a provocateur. But arguing that distinction has not been a profitable venture in recent years in Guatemala where death squads have murdered thousands of people. Some, such as Amnesty International, say the death toll is in the tens of thousands.

Having lived in Central America in the 1950s, Carmack made Meso-American studies his specialty throughout school. A member of the Albany faculty since 1970, he was a founder of the University's Institute of Meso-American Studies in 1975. In the last 10 years, he has spent a total of more than three years in Guatemala.

"We always had some trouble there, particularly over artifacts which some local officials were digging and selling illegally on the black market," Carmack recalls. "But we had good local backing in areas where we were working so we always felt we could handle the situation."

Then, frightened by events in Nicaragua and mistrustful of the native

population, the government in 1977 began a program to "clean up the Indian zones." That, Carmack says, meant open season for kidnapping, torture, and murder.

Carmack's own troubles began in 1979 when he planned a congress for anthropologists in the ancient Mayan capital of Utatlan, rather than in Guatemala City, as government officials wanted. The final speaker at that conference used the occasion to attack the government. Carmack was blamed in some quarters. He was labeled a left-winger — if not in action then at least in sympathy.

His last trip to Guatemala in the spring of 1981 was terrifying, he recalls.

"I went there first that year in February but the pictures I needed from that trip didn't turn out. To go back and re-shoot, I entered the country by night, by bus from Mexico. I was petrified. Everyone I met in Guatemala was petrified. The killing was widespread. I stayed undercover the entire time I was there."

Two weeks after he left the country, the minister of education, a military officer close to the country's leaders, denounced Carmack as an enemy of the government in a national radio broadcast.

"By then I was back in Mexico," Carmack recalls. "That broadcast made it clear to me that I was a fair target to disappear or be killed if I went back to Guatemala." Later he learned from the CIA that his name was on a death list.

Denunciations and death threats are hardly a normal occupational hazard in the conduct of academic research. But then most researchers aren't kept apart from the work and study of a lifetime by a military government and a civil war.

An ethnologist and ethnohistorian, Carmack has always specialized in the study of the Quiche Maya, the Guatemalan natives who ruled that country's highlands from approximately 1200 until the Spanish conquests three centuries later.

His scholarly reputation soared in 1974 when, after 10 years of work in and around the town of Santa Cruz, he was permitted to see and study seven native chronicles, original records of the Quiche, that had been kept a guarded secret for centuries.

With some 700,000 Quiche-speaking people and many more Quiche descendants today in Guatemala, the native influence remains strong in the culture. In some rural areas, the 260-day Mayan calendar is still in use and people plan their activities by the fates

associated with each of the numbered days.

"If the calendar says the fates are against marriage, there are no Quiche weddings that day," Carmack says.

But since the Quiche basin in northern Guatemala is a hot bed for guerrilla activity and violence, anthropologists and other researchers in the field have been obliged to find other places and people to study.

"It has affected at least a dozen of our graduate students, including two who midway through the research and writing of their doctoral dissertations had to shift to new topics," says Carmack.

"We have canceled one project that was supported by a \$30,000 grant. We have all agreed it is just too dangerous to go to Guatemala now."

Further, Carmack and many colleagues believe that regardless of personal safety, they should not be conducting research in the country given conditions today.

"We feel it isn't right to carry on with business as usual while people all around are being killed," he says.

Carmack believes that scholars still working in Guatemala are either politically on the ultra right wing or

simply just naive. For views such as that, he has few friends among Guatemalan officials.

"I am a perfect example of someone who was square in the middle, a scholar in the country to pursue research interests, not politics. But there is no center. Those who were there have simply been eliminated, or terrorized, or have fled the country."

Unlike his students and many other Quiche specialists, Carmack's scholarly activity will likely not suffer due to his absence from Guatemala. He has an enormous quantity of data that needs work and so far he has completed for publication only two of the seven native chronicles, the texts of which are now safely tucked away in his files.

Carmack and Albany colleague Gary Gossen have already begun organizing a new project in Chiapas in southern Mexico where beginning next year they will be working with a Mayan group closely related to the Quiche.

Carmack concedes he would rather be making arrangements to go back to Guatemala. But he knows that isn't possible and he has settled in on the challenges of the new project.

"We will have to tackle the same problems intellectually, but in a very different political climate. It's the next best thing."

—Phil Johnson

Robert Carmack





Ramaley

Judith Ramaley Is New Vice President

Judith A. Ramaley, formerly an assistant vice president at the University of Nebraska, is the new vice president for academic affairs at the University. Ramaley, the first woman vice president in Albany's history as a University, succeeds David Martin, who retired last year after 22 years at Albany.

The State University Board of Trustees named Ramaley to the job in April.

As vice president for academic affairs, Ramaley will serve as Albany's chief academic officer, report directly to University President Vincent O'Leary and serve as chief executive officer in O'Leary's absence.

Ramaley, 41, of Omaha, Neb., has been assistant vice president for academic affairs for the University of Nebraska system for the last two years. In that post, she was the chief deputy to Steven Sample, who was named president of the University Center at Buffalo earlier this year.

Ramaley, whose appointment ends an exhaustive, nationwide search, will assume her duties in mid-summer. Stephen E. DeLong of Rexford, who has been serving as acting academic vice president, will return to the geology department upon her arrival.

A native of Vincennes, Ind., Ramaley is a graduate of Swarthmore College and received her doctorate from UCLA, specializing in anatomy. Her research interests relate to physiology of puberty, and her teaching has been in endocrinology and reproductive biology. She is the author of four books and more than 60 articles in her field.

Ramaley completed post-doctoral work at Indiana University, where she worked with National Academy of Sciences members Dewey Neff and Felix Haurowitz. She began teaching at Indiana University, and in 1972 was named assistant professor in the department of physiology and biophysics at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. She was promoted to full professor there in 1978. She continued to

hold her academic appointment while serving in her administrative roles with the Nebraska system.

The University of Nebraska has an enrollment of nearly 40,000 students, with major campuses in Lincoln and Omaha, plus research centers and extension services.

The University at Albany, one of four university centers in the 64-campus SUNY system, has an enrollment of about 16,000, including about 4,400 graduate students.

Albany Is a "10"

The rankings are out and Albany is a '10.'

In this instance, 10 is not perfect but when measured against the rankings given other institutions in the recently issued *New York Times Selective Guide to Colleges*, it is more than respectable.

The guide takes a look at 265 institutions throughout the country, describing each campus in a gossipy essay drawn mostly from student comments. The book ranks the institutions on academic quality, social atmosphere, and quality of life.

In the all important category of "academics," Albany was given four of a possible five stars as were SUNY's three other University Centers. Only four of the 39 institutions in New York that were included in the guide received five stars. Syracuse University was awarded two stars while small private institutions Union and the University of Rochester were awarded three stars.

In the other two categories, Albany received three stars, or "average" ratings.

Unlike college basketball, where there are tournaments to select the best, academic rankings are far more subjective and the *Times* book is just the latest entry in the college guide sweepstakes. But it has elicited unprecedented attention.

In at least one instance, a college president quarreled in public with Edward B. Fiske, *Times* education editor and author of the book. The president earned a promise from the *Times* that a three-star rating would be reviewed and possibly upgraded for the next printing.

While Fiske claims no competitive ranking was intended, star totals were quickly tallied. No campus received a perfect 15. Only three, Brown, Stanford, and the University of Virginia, earned 14 stars. Tiny Barat College received the low mark of five. Wesleyan University, alma mater of guide author Fiske, received 11 stars, including five for academics.

In the wake of the unhappy grumbling by some over the guide, the *New York Times* announced it was withdrawing its name from the guide's title in future editions. Fiske will still be identified as the *Times* education editor.

Woman Puts Her Money "in the Atmosphere"

One woman's lifelong fascination with weather — and her enjoyment of meteorologist Ray Falconer's lectures — has led her to establish a \$50,000 trust fund to help the University pursue its research and education in atmospheric sciences.

Gertrude Thompson, a New Jersey woman who spends her summers in the Adirondacks, says she first became fascinated with the weather when, as a terrified 8-year-old, she witnessed the worst monsoon in the history of India. The spunky 74-year-old widow still numbers meteorology among her favorite hobbies (along with canoeing and trolling for lake trout), and says she's derived so much enjoyment from her interest in weather that "I've decided I would like to put my money in the atmosphere."

She established her \$50,000 trust fund in the name of meteorologist Ray Falconer of the Atmospheric Science Department and Atmospheric Sciences Research Center of the University. The gift is one of the largest in University history. It will help Albany continue its research and education in atmospheric sciences, especially pertaining to the Adirondacks.

Atmospheric sciences in the Adirondacks have mesmerized Thompson for 20 years. She has been traveling from her Adirondack "camp" — as vacation retreats are known in that area — to hear ASRC-sponsored lectures at the center's Whiteface Mountain Field Station since the eight-week annual summer series began in 1962. To get to the lectures, she makes a mile-long canoe trip to her car, and then drives 40 miles to the field station.

Thompson, a retired psychologist and counselor of delinquent adolescents, lives alone in her summer camp, despite being partially disabled by a hip injury more than 10 years ago. She says she canoes about 300 miles every summer and spends the rest of her time attending lectures throughout the Adirondacks,

Thompson



fishing for trout, bass and catfish, or studying Adirondack vegetation.

The weather and the mysteries of nature have captivated Thompson since her childhood. She was born, by her own admission, "with a silver spoon in my mouth." Even though her family, the meat-packing Swift family of Chicago, lost its fortune in the Great Depression, she and the sculptor she married were able to continue their world travels, thrilling to sights ranging from the little rivers of southern Africa to the tranquility of the Adirondacks.

Since the death of her husband many years ago, Thompson has been spending her summers in the Adirondacks whenever her health permitted, and canoeing part of the way to the Falconer lectures even when it meant stowing her crutches in the canoe. She says she decided to become a benefactor of Falconer and the University's atmospheric science projects when her husband's and her original intended beneficiary, a museum for sculpture, went bankrupt.

"I love money and I love to watch what it can do," Thompson said. So she decided to create a fund for Falconer.

GE and University Develop New Tool for Computer Age

Good old Yankee ingenuity is legendary. When a gizmo breaks, an American will find a way to fix it.

But what do you do when your gizmo is so small that a thousand of them laid end to end would measure a mere millimeter?

At the University, there will soon be help for such problems. With the help of a \$75,000 gift from General Electric, scientists from Albany and from G.E. will develop a one-of-a-kind research tool known as a nuclear microprobe at the University nuclear accelerator.

The research tool will be able to analyze the composition and structure of regions as small as a thousandth of a millimeter in diameter and will have dramatic implications for the microelectronics industry.

There are only two other nuclear microprobes in the United States and the Albany facility will be able to do what they do at 10 times their speed.

The facility will enable researchers to analyze faulty microchips and, ultimately, to develop smaller, faster and more reliable chips that will play an increasingly important role in medicine, communications, industry, the office and the home.

The microprobe will be added onto the University's existing particle accelerator which, because of its high electrical current capacity, is especially suited to this type of research.